

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EA-09 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 DEAE-00 SNM-02 /036 W

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R 221558Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2670

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USIA WASHDC

UNCLAS OSLO 5445

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NO, KN, POIP, SOPN

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREAN SMUGGLING

1. ALL ASPECTS OF THE NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATIC SMUGGLING STORY HAVE BEEN THE SUBJECT OF VERY HEAVY, SENSATIONAL PLAY THIS WEEK IN NORWEGIAN MEDIA, WHICH OBVIOUSLY IS DELIGHTED WITH THE RARE OPPORTUNITY TO REPORT A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL SCANDAL ON HOME-GROUND.

2. FROM THE ANNOUNCEMENT OCTOBER 18 THAT THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN OSLO WAS INVOLVED, ALL NORWAY'S MAJOR DAILIES AND THE NATIONAL RADIO AND TV NETWORKS HAVE STRESSED THE FACT THAT THE SMUGGLING OPERATIONS IN NORWAY WERE PART OF A LARGER EFFORT APPARENTLY DIRECTED FROM PYONGYANG. LABOR PARTY DAILY ARBEIDERBLADET, IN A TYPICAL BANNER HEADLINE, SAID "ILLEGAL ALCOHOL SALES WERE INCOME FOR KIM IL-SUNG". STORIES CONTRASTED NORTH KOREA'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES WITH HOW MUCH THE NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY IN OSLO SPENT BUYING NEWSPAPER SPACE FOR SPEECHES BY KIM IL-SUNG AND TO PUBLISH PROPAGANDA BOOKS IN NORWEGIAN. REPORTS FROM COPENHAGEN, STOCKHOLM AND HELSINKI WERE ALSO GIVEN PROMINENT PLAY.

3. TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK, PRESS EMPHASIS BEGAN TO SHIFT
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TO THE NARCOTICS AND TERRORIST IMPLICATIONS IN THE AFFAIR.

AT FIRST THE MEDIA INDICATED THAT THE EMBASSY IN OSLO WAS PROBABLY NOT TRAFFICKING IN NARCOTICS, UNLIKE IN OTHER SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES, BUT ON OCTOBER 21 SEVERAL DAILIES REPORTED THAT NARCOTICS MIGHT COME INTO THE NORWEGIAN PART OF THE AFFAIR AFTER ALL. AND ON OCTOBER 22, SEVERAL DAILIES--AND THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING NETWORKS--PROMINENTLY PLAYED REPORTS THAT THE SMUGGLING AND EFFORTS TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS MAY HAVE BEEN DIRECTED BY THE NORTH KOREAN MILITARY ATTACHE IN EAST GERMANY.

4. IN AMUSING SET OF INTERVIEWS, RADICAL DAILY DAGBLADET ASKED THE HEADS OF FOUR NORWEGIAN-NORTH KOREAN "FRIENDSHIP" ORGANIZATIONS

THEIR VIEWS ON THE AFFAIR. ALL OF THEM CONDEMNED THE SMUGGLING AND ADVOCATED A PROMPT APOLOGY FROM PYONGYANG, BUT THEY ATTEMPTED TO EXPLAIN AWAY THE AFFAIR AS A RESULT OF AMERICAN "IMPERIALIST" PRESSURE ON NORTH KOREA.

5. THOUGH THE SCANDAL HAS PROMPTED A FEW CRITICAL SIDEBARS ON THE PRIVILEGES ENJOYED BY ALL DIPLOMATS, AND NORTH KOREAN CHARGES FROM STOCKHOLM THAT THE CIA WAS BEHIND THE WHOLE AFFAIR HAVE BEEN REPORTED,

NORWEGIAN MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN FOCUSED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON NORTH

KOREA AND WHAT DAILY AFTENPOSTEN DESCRIBED AS ITS "BETWEEN-THE-ACTS CLOWNS."
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